

JACOB POST GIRAUD, JR., AND HIS WORKS.

BY WITMER STONE.

Plate XVIII.

IT has always seemed to the writer a duty of present-day ornithologists to save from oblivion as many of the facts as possible concerning the lives of those who long ago laid the foundations of our science, and he has accordingly from time to time prepared biographical sketches of some of the older American ornithologists, concerning whom little or no record has appeared in our published literature.

With the object of furthering this work Mr. William Dutcher, at the meeting of the Council of the American Ornithologists' Union in New York City, in November, 1918, submitted to him some memoranda that he had collected relative to the life of J. P. Giraud, Jr., the pioneer writer on the birds of Long Island, a field in which Mr. Dutcher himself is a notable authority and a worthy successor to Giraud. A photograph of the ornithologist was also loaned for reproduction and forms the basis of the plate which accompanies the present sketch.

Finding that there were several gaps in Mr. Dutcher's notes, the preparation of the sketch has been delayed until search might be made for the missing information, and in this connection the writer is under great obligations to Dr. George Bird Grinnell and Dr. T. S. Palmer. Indeed, he feels that his part in the preparation of the sketch has been simply that of arranging and editing the materials that these gentlemen and Mr. Dutcher have brought together.

Jacob Post Giraud, Jr., was born in New York City on August 22, 1811. His father presumably bore the same name, as in the older city directories there are listed Jacob P. Giraud and Jacob P., Jr., and as time went on the younger man occupied the same residence at No. 4 West 13th Street that was formerly the home of the elder. One of Giraud's brothers was the grandfather of the late Daniel Giraud Elliot, while another brother, Daniel Giraud,



Photograph and Autograph of J. P. Giraud, Jr., pasted on the fly-leaf of a copy of 'The Birds of Long Island,' purchased in a book store in Philadelphia and now in the library of William Dutcher.

was the man after whom Dr. Elliot was named. According to Dr. F. M. Chapman's sketch of Dr. Elliot's life (*Auk*, 1917, p. 1) the Giraud family was of French ancestry and settled originally at New Rochelle, N. Y., moving some two centuries ago to New York City.

Giraud was engaged in business at 138 Front St. as a dealer in provisions and resided at 44 Laurel St., 26 Walker St., and at Bergen, N. J., removing later to 4 West 13th St. Dr. Grinnell finds his name in all the directories from 1837 to 1859, in which year or soon after he moved to Poughkeepsie, N. Y., where he seems to have become somewhat of a recluse, and he died at his residence on the South Road some two miles below Poughkeepsie on July 19,¹ 1870.

A letter received by Mr. Dutcher from the late George N. Lawrence, written in 1893, is the best account of Giraud that we have and is unquestionably reliable, as Mr. Lawrence knew him well. He writes: "Jacob P. Giraud was born in New York and his business was that of a dealer in provisions. It seemed to consist mainly of furnishing supplies to the shipping. He had not the lively, companionable manners of his friend P. Brasher, but was rather reserved. He was perfectly reliable, firm in his friendships and very decided in his opinions.

"The publication of his 'Sixteen New Birds from Texas' was quite a surprise, and established the fact that there was something of importance to be done in a scientific way besides making a collection. He did not skin birds, and everything in the way of taxidermy was done for him by John G. Bell. He was careless in examining bird skins, and generally they left his hands with the feathers disarranged.

"After getting married he went to reside in New Jersey on the heights and became quite interested in gardening. He gained some notoriety from having succeeded in bringing two crops of corn to maturity on the same piece of ground in one season.

"I was desirous to get his photograph, but he was averse to having it taken. After he moved to Poughkeepsie and gave his

¹ *Amer. Jour. of Sci. and Arts.* (1870, p. 293) although Poughkeepsie papers gave the date as July 18 (T. S. Palmer).

collection to Vassar College, some of the young ladies induced him to sit for one, and a copy was sent me by Prof. Orton. After going to Poughkeepsie he did nothing more in ornithological investigation, but occasionally delivered a lecture to the college students."

Besides presenting his collection to the college he also bequeathed to the institution \$30,000, to be paid at the time of his wife's death, and two other bequests for the completion of his collection of North American birds. In 1890, probably at the time of Mrs. Giraud's death (she was living in 1887 at an advanced age), the courts revoked one-half of the main bequest and one of the additional ones, leaving only \$2,000 for the purchase of additional birds. With regard to the collection, Prof. Wm. B. Dwight, professor of Natural History at Vassar in 1887, wrote Mr. Dutcher that they had a catalogue in Giraud's own handwriting prepared in October, 1867, which consisted of a list of the specimens with an explanation of the scientific names, but with rarely any additional data. Occasionally a specimen was marked "from Long Island" or "from Texas," but nothing further.

Prof. Spencer F. Baird, when as a young man he visited New York in 1841, met Giraud at the shop of John G. Bell, the taxidermist, and was invited to inspect his collection, which Baird pronounced the finest collection of American birds that he had ever seen. Giraud gave Baird a number of specimens of shore birds and others which he did not have and promised him more the following season. Baird was at this time eighteen years of age, while Giraud was a man of thirty.

Giraud's contributions to ornithological literature were two in number, both notable works and both today rated among the rarest books of their kind.

The first was entitled: "A Description of Sixteen New Species of North American Birds described in the Annals of the New York Lyceum of Natural History. By Jacob P. Giraud, Jr. Collected in Texas, 1838. New York. George F. Nesbitt, printer, Tontine Building, corner of Wall and Water Streets. 1841."

It is a folio of eighteen leaves and eight plates, neither paged nor numbered. Of the sixteen species described only fourteen are figured. The plates are drawn by "A. Halsey Esqur." and the lithography is by N. Carrier, 2 Spruce St., N. Y. This work has been the cause of no little controversy, since, on account of

its rarity, the new names proposed in it were not generally recognized,¹ while the fact that the birds were really obtained in Texas was almost immediately questioned. While many of them have since been actually found in the United States, either in Texas or Arizona, it is certain that the collection as a whole never came from Texas. All of the species occur in Mexico, but it is questionable whether they all came from any one locality in that republic, since some of them, as shown by the types, all but three of which are preserved in the U. S. National Museum, represent races which are found only in southern Mexico. In spite of the widely expressed doubt as to the correctness of the locality, Giraud, according to Dr. Coues, stoutly maintained to the day of his death that they were taken in Texas. He never described them in the 'Annals of the New York Lyceum,' as he states on the title page, nor did he ever present any information as to who collected them or how they came into his possession. The text to the plates consists of descriptions only, with a line or two of dedication in the case of species which were named after individuals. Before the descriptions, however, there is an introductory page on which are given the names of other species contained in his "Texan" collections. This page is as follows: "In adding to my collection a number of specimens of various genera and species received from Texas, I discovered many of those species procured by Dr. Townsend and others during their 'journey across the Rocky Mountains,' which induces me to believe that many of these species that visit the Columbia River pass the winter in Texas. Figured and described in Audubon's American Ornithology." Then follows the list:

"Harris's Woodpecker. *Picus Harrisii* Audubon.

Red Shafted Woodpecker. *Colaptes Mexicanus* Swainson,
Picus Mexicanus Audubon.

Black Headed Grosbeak. *Coccyzus Melanocephalus* Swainson,
Fringilla Melanocephalus Audubon.

Evening Grosbeak. *Coccothraustes Vespertina* Swainson and
Richardson, *Fringilla Vespertina*, Cooper, Bonaparte, Audubon.

Crimson Fronted Finch. *Pyrrhula Frontalis* Bonaparte
and Nuttall, *Fringilla Frontalis* Audubon.

¹ P. L. Slater published an account of it (P. Z. S. 1855, p. 65) with the identity of such of the species as had been previously described.

- Western Blue Bird. *Sialica occidentalis* Townsend, Audubon.
 Say's Fly Catcher. *Tyrannula Saya* Swainson and Richardson,
Muscicapa Saya Bonaparte, Nuttall, Audubon.
 Rocky Mountain Fly Catcher. *Tyrannula Nigricans* Swainson,
Muscicapa Nigricans Audubon.
 Audubon's Wood Warbler. *Sylvia Audubonii* Townsend
 and Audubon.
 Yellow Headed Troopial. *Angelaius Xanthocephalus* Swainson
 and Richardson, *Icterus Xanthocephalus* Bonaparte, Nuttall
 and Audubon.
 Arctic Blue Bird. *Sialia Artica* Swainson, Nuttall, Audubon.
 Violet Green Swallow. *Hirundo Thalassinus* Swainson,
Hirundo Thalassina Audubon.
 Townsends Wood Warbler. *Sylvicola Townsendii* Nuttall,
Sylvia Townsendii Audubon.
 Hermit Wood Warbler. *Sylvicola Occidentalis* Townsend,
Sylvia Occidentalis Audubon.
 Arkansas Fly Catcher. *Tyrannus Verticalis* Say, *Muscicapa*
Verticalis Audubon, Bonaparte, Nuttall.
 Brown Song Finch. *Fringilla Crinerea* Gmel and Audubon.
 Oregon Snow Bird. *Fringilla Oregona* Townsend and Audubon.¹

"With the present heretofore undescribed species, which I have the gratification of introducing into the American Fauna.

Measurement taken from dried Specimens.

J. P. GIRAUD, Jr."

For the convenience of those who may not have access to the original volume, the list of species as given in the text headings, with their present-day equivalents as determined by Mr. Robert Ridgway (Birds of North and Middle America), is appended. The plates contain English names only which differ sometimes in spelling:

"Audubon's Oriole, *Icterus audubonii* [no figure] = *Icterus melanocephalus audubonii*, Audubon's Oriole.

Texan Fly Catcher, *Muscicapa texensis* = *Myiozetetes texensis texensis*, Giraud's Flycatcher.

Lawrence's Fly Catcher, *Muscicapa lawrenceii* = *Myiarchus lawrenceii lawrenceii*, Lawrence's Flycatcher.

¹ Errors and misspellings copied verbatim.

- Buff Breasted Fly Catcher, *Muscicapa fulvifrons* = *Empidonax fulvifrons fulvifrons*, Fulvous Flycatcher.
- Halsey's Warbler, *Sylvia halseii* = *Dendroica nigrescens*, Black-throated Gray Warbler (autumn female).
- Derham's Fly Catcher, *Muscicapa derhamii* = *Myioborus miniatus miniatus*, Red-bellied Redstart.
- Bell's Fly Catcher, *Muscicapa belli* = *Basileuterus belli belli*, Bell's Warbler.
- White Cheeked Titmouse, *Parus leucotis* = *Ergaticus ruber*, Red Warbler.
- Texan Finch, *Fringilla texensis* = *Astragalinus psaltria mexicanus*, Mexican Goldfinch.
- Azure Capped Manakin, *Pipra galericulata* = *Euphonia elegantissima*, Blue-hooded Euphonia.
- White Shouldered Fly Catcher, *Muscicapa leucomus* = *Setophaga picta picta*, Painted Redstart.
- Brazier's Fly Catcher, *Muscicapa brasierii* = *Basileuterus culicivorus brasierii*, Brasher's Warbler.
- Red Fronted Fly Catcher, *Muscicapa rubrifrons* = *Cardellina rubrifrons*, Red-faced Warbler.
- Olive Backed Warbler, *Sylvia olivacea* = *Peucedramus olivaceus*, Olive Warbler.
- White Throated Wren, *Certhia albifrons* = *Catherpes mexicanus albifrons*, Giraud's Canyon Wren.
- Lesser Shore Lark, *Alauda minor*. [no figure] = *Otocoris alpestris chrysolama*, Mexican Horned Lark."

It will be noticed from the above that no less than nine of the sixteen were really undescribed species and still bear today the specific names which Giraud bestowed upon them, while seven have been found to be inhabitants of either Texas or Arizona.

A word about the men after whom Giraud named a number of his new species may not be out of place. All were his personal and ornithological friends. Audubon and Lawrence need no introduction. Abraham Halsey, who drew the plates, was according to Giraud, the president of the Brooklyn Lyceum of Natural History; Derham he refers to as "the lamented Cassimere H. Derham." In the 'Annals of the New York Lyceum' of which society he was a mem-

ber, his name appears as H. C. DeRham. The failure to capitalize the second part of his name in Giraud's work has resulted in the bird being sometimes quoted as *Durhami*, so anxious are some to emend names to a supposedly correct form! John G. Bell was the well-known taxidermist, "devoted to natural history," to quote Giraud, and Philip Brasher was a close friend and collector of Long Island birds who apparently did not appear as the author of any ornithological contributions. His name also suffered two misspellings, as may be seen above. The appearance of Giraud's own name in connection with the Texan Horned Lark *Otocoris alpestris giraudi* in later works, requires a word of explanation. Mr. Henshaw in his review of the Horned Larks (Auk, 1884, p. 260) states that this Texan race is the bird that Giraud described as *Alauda minor*, as he ascertained by examining the type, but this name being pre-occupied he renamed it in honor of its original describer. Mr. Ridgway, however, examining the same type many years later, decides that it belongs to the Mexican race *O. a. chrysolæma*. Be this as it may, I am sure no one will begrudge Giraud the well-merited recognition that was in error conferred upon him.

Giraud's other work "The Birds of Long Island," published by Wiley and Putnam, 161 Broadway, New York, in 1844, was the best piece of local ornithological work that had appeared up to that time, and is still the leading authority upon Long Island birds, though of course important additions have been made to the list of species by later ornithologists who have followed in Giraud's footsteps.

The work, moreover, is of great historic value today, since it gives us a reliable picture of water-bird life in early times, when many species now rare were of common occurrence, while there is frequent incidental mention of birds from other parts of the eastern United States. He who possesses a copy of this classic with the gilded representation of the Heath Hen on the back of the cover may well count himself fortunate. Dr. Elliott Coues apparently did not estimate this work of Giraud's at its true value in his 'Bibliography,' as he dismisses it with very curt mention. His remark, "Audubon's classification and nomenclature," moreover, is not strictly correct, and several species not mentioned by Audubon are added. That the latter fact escaped Dr. Coues' keen eye is rather remarkable. The changes from Audubon's nomenclature